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DOH-PINELLAS MONITORS TB AND PROVIDES TESTING

Tuberculosis still active around the globe and in our community



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The Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County (DOH-Pinellas) continues to monitor tuberculosis (TB) cases in the county as part of its public-health mission. Its centers offer blood and skin tests that can detect TB so it can be treated.



"Testing for and diagnosing TB remains a vital part of public health in Pinellas," said Dr. Ulyee Choe, DOH-Pinellas Director. "Although TB is more common in other parts of the world, it's still active in our community and around the nation, including our county. The good news is that, unlike in past decades, TB is treatable once it's detected."

World TB Day is observed on **Saturday, March 24**. DOH-Pinellas provides testing at these locations from 8 AM to 3 PM weekdays:

- St. Petersburg – 205 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. St. N.
- Pinellas Park – 6350 76th Ave N.
- Mid-County – 8751 Ulmerton Rd., Largo
- Clearwater – 310 N. Myrtle Ave.
- Tarpon Springs – 301 S. Disston Ave.

DOH-Pinellas offers two types of TB tests. Prices start at \$20 for the skin test, although the blood test offers better accuracy. Skin tests require a return visit for staff to interpret them. Both are provided without an appointment.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported 9,272 new cases of TB in the nation in 2016.

In 2016, there were 31 active TB cases diagnosed in Pinellas; the year-to-date total during 2017 was 28. DOH-Pinellas reports its TB cases monthly on its *Epi Watch* newsletters at <http://pinellas.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/infectious-disease-services/epidemiology/newsletter/epi-watch/index.html>.

People with other health conditions that weaken their body's ability to fight infection are more susceptible to becoming infected with TB. Those with HIV, patients with undiagnosed or uncontrolled diabetes, those undergoing chemotherapy, frail elderly people and those taking

prescription medications that suppress their immune systems are at higher risk than healthy adults.

Tuberculosis is spread by an infected person with active disease when he or she coughs or sneezes. Others become infected after prolonged contact with a person who has *active* TB. People with positive TB results may be diagnosed with active or latent forms of the disease. A person who has the infectious type can pass the disease to others. A person with *latent* TB has no symptoms, cannot pass the disease to others and may never develop active disease.

Active tuberculosis is treatable with antibiotic medications completed over the course of six to nine months. If untreated, it can be fatal. Although those who have *latent* TB may not infect others, medical treatment will prevent their becoming sick and having active disease in the future.

A person with *active*, infectious TB may have a bad cough that lasts over weeks, bloody secretions from the lungs and night sweats. People with *active* TB are kept away from others to prevent their passing on the disease.

Those who think they may have been exposed to someone with symptoms of *active* TB are encouraged to be tested, especially if they have other health conditions that make them less able to fight infections.

For information about DOH-Pinellas' TB Control Program, go to <http://pinellas.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/infectious-disease-services/tb-control/index.html>.

Follow us on Twitter [@HealthyPinellas](#) for agency updates.

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